

## THE MALCOLM LOWRY OF LONG BEACH

My friend John wants to go to Mexico.  
He's wanted a pink villa on the coast  
for years.  
But now he's been reading the biography  
of Malcolm Lowry,  
so he wants to go to Cuernavaca  
which he calls Quauhnahuac --  
Indian for valley of the trees --  
as Lowry did.  
He never drinks much  
but the other night he came over  
and had five straight tequilas.  
My good tequila.  
He's a painter and a designer,  
and he said, "I think I want to be  
a writer now." Jokingly, I hope.  
I like his painting.

Now he sees symbols, he says, in everything  
around him. He wants to go to Mexico, he says,  
because he has a Jungian urge to go south,  
to go into himself.  
He asks my wife if she liked Mexico.  
He pulls maps out of his pockets of Mexico.  
He made a painting of a night in Mexico.

I've seen John like this before.  
When he wanted a house, he only spoke  
about houses. Then he bought one.

When he wanted some chairs,  
he bought five sets of four,  
gave them away when he couldn't live with them,  
then bought a sixth set,  
which he couldn't afford.

John is a man of extremes, a monomaniac  
like Lowry was, I guess.  
The only difference is that John  
is an expert at tying his shoes.